



South African Communist Party

# Constitution

## Clauses 1 to 7

As amended at the 13th National Congress, July 2012

*Downloaded from the SACP web site, 3 March 2013*

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### **1. NAME**

The name of the organisation shall be the South African Communist Party (SACP).

### **2. SYMBOL AND FLAG**

The symbol of the SACP shall be a black star containing a gold hammer and sickle. The flag of the SACP shall be red with the symbol placed in the top left-hand corner.

### **3. AIMS**

3.1 The SACP strives to be the leading political force of the South African working class whose interests it promotes in the struggle to advance, deepen and defend the national democratic revolution and to achieve socialism.

3.2 The SACP shall pursue this by means of educating, organising and mobilising the working class and its allies in support of our Party and its objectives of completing the national democratic revolution and achieving socialism.

3.3 The SACP shall strive to win acceptance as a vanguard democratically in ideological contest with other political parties.

3.4 The ultimate aim of the SACP is the building of a communist society in which all forms of exploitation of person by person will have ended and in which all the products of human endeavour will be distributed according to need. The attainment of such a society will require an interim socialist formation in which reward will be measured by contribution.

3.5 At all stages the SACP commits itself to a social order that will respect completely the cultural, language and religious rights of all sections of our society and the democratic rights of the individual. The SACP will recognise the right to independence of all social organisations and political parties that function within the ambit of South Africa's Constitution. This implies a multiparty political framework in which there will be regular, open and free elections. Within such a framework, the SACP will primarily dedicate itself to advancing the interests of the working class and its allies in democratic contest with other political forces in all spheres of life.

#### **4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

In leading the working class towards national and social emancipation, the SACP is guided by those principles of Marxism-Leninism whose universal validity has been proven by historical experience. The foundations of these principles were laid by Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Vladimir Lenin and enriched by other great revolutionaries. In applying the general principles of Marxism-Leninism, the SACP is, in the first place, concerned with their indigenous elaboration and application to the concrete realities of our own developing situation. More particularly, the SACP will work to:

4.1 End the system of capitalist exploitation in South Africa and to establish a socialist society based on the common ownership of, participation in, and control by the producers of the key means of production. Such a society will respect and protect all personal non-exploitative property.

4.2 Organise, educate and lead the working class in the struggle for socialism and the more immediate objectives of defending and deepening the national democratic revolution and of achieving national and social emancipation. The main aim of the unfolding national democratic revolution is to complete the national liberation of the African people in particular and black people in general, to ensure the destruction of the legacy of white supremacy, and the strengthening of democracy in every sphere

of life. By participating in this revolution, the SACP aims to eradicate patriarchal relations, and weaken and ultimately destroy the economic and political power of the capitalist class through struggle for working class hegemony over society, in particular the ownership and control of the economy and the achievement of one united state of people's power. In this state, working class interests will be dominant and the economic conditions will be created which make it possible to move towards social emancipation and, eventually, the total abolition of the exploitation of person by person in both public and private spheres of life.

4.3 Organise, educate and advance women within the working class, the poor and rural communities in pursuit of the aims of the SACP; and to raise the consciousness of the working class and its allies around the integral and oppressive nature of gender relations within South African capitalism.

4.4 Play a key role in strengthening the revolutionary alliance of all classes and strata whose interests are served by the immediate aims of the national democratic revolution.

4.5 Spread the widest possible understanding of our basic ideology and its application to South African conditions, particularly among the working class.

4. 6 Pay particular attention to uniting the different strata of the working class.

4. 7 Combat racism, tribalism, sex discrimination, regionalism, chauvinism, xenophobia and all forms of narrow nationalism.

4. 8 Encourage an ongoing national and international dialogue with all organisations committed to peace, transformation of gender relations, nonracialism, democracy and the preservation of our environment.

4. 9 Promote the ideas of proletarian internationalism and the unity of the workers of South Africa and the world.

## **5. MEMBERSHIP**

5.1 Every South African over the age of 16 who accepts the Constitution, aims, guiding principles, policies and programmes of the SACP, undertakes to carry out its decisions and to be active in a SACP structure, pays whatever dues are decided on, and serves a year as an interim member shall be eligible for membership.

5.2 The recruiting of members shall be primarily through the branch structures, under the supervision of provincial executive committees, provincial councils, district executive committees and district councils.

5.3 A person applying to join the SACP shall be an interim member for 1 year. An interim member shall participate in SACP structures and activities but shall not have

the right to vote or be elected to any executive structure of the SACP. To qualify for membership, the interim member has to become familiar with the SACP Constitution and policies, and participate in Party programmes and campaigns. The Branch Executive Committee, or in the case of a new branch, the District Executive Committee or Provincial Executive Committee as provided for in section 21.6, shall confer membership on an interim member

5.4 After consultation with PECs, the Central Committee (CC) shall provide guidelines to give effect to the provisions in this Constitution on interim membership.

5.5 A person who does not qualify for citizenship or permanent residence in South Africa may be accepted as an associate member if his/her application is accepted by the Central Committee. An associate member shall have full constitutional rights and obligations but may not stand for election as a member of the executive at any level of the SACP.

5.6 Any applicant refused admission to membership by a branch including an interim member having served a year in the branch shall have the right to appeal against such a decision to the District Council. Should the appeal fail, the applicant shall have the right to refer such appeal progressively up to the higher structures of the SACP.

5.7 All members shall renew their membership on an annual basis in order to remain members of the SACP, and shall remain active in the work of the SACP.

5.8 All new members of the SACP shall undergo comprehensive induction training under the direction of the Branch, District and Provincial structures.

5.9 Every member has a duty to:

5.9.1 Regularly participate in the activities of the SACP and conscientiously implement the policies, decisions and directives of the party.

5.9.2 Study Marxism-Leninism and endeavour to raise his/her level of understanding.

5.9.3 Read, engage with and popularise SACP publications.

5.9.4 Serve the masses, strengthen ties with them, learn from them, convey their aspirations to the SACP and work in mass organisations within the framework of SACP policies and programmes.

5.9.5 Place the interests of the workers and the poor above personal interests.

5.9.6 Practice criticism and self-criticism with a view to helping each other and improving individual and collective work.

5.9.7 Cultivate comradely relations towards one another and constantly develop a fraternal spirit within the SACP.

5.9.8 Act in a manner that is frank, honest and truthful to the SACP and does not betray the interests of the Party.

5.9.9 Safeguard the unity and solidarity of the SACP and vigorously defend the interests of the workers and the poor against their opponents.

5.9.10 Act in the interests of proletarian internationalism.

5.9.11 Act, in his or her personal conduct, in a manner which will bring credit to the SACP and serve as a standard bearer of the highest communist ethic and morality.

5.9.12 Observe the SACP Constitution and Party discipline.

5.10 All SACP members who earn above a certain amount, as determined by the CC, shall pay a levy to be determined by the CC from time to time.

5.11 Every person who joins the SACP must pledge as follows:

*"I accept the aims and objectives of the SACP and agree to abide by its Constitution and loyally to carry out the decisions of the Party. I shall strive to live up to the ideals of Communism and shall selflessly serve the workers and the poor and the country, always placing the interests of the Party and the workers and the poor above personal interests."*

5.12 A member in good standing is one who is paid-up and fulfills the basic requirements set out in this section. The number of years a member has been in good standing does not include the 1 year served as interim member, where applicable.

## **6. BASIC ORGANISATIONAL PRINCIPLES**

6.1 The Party shall function according to the conventional principles of democratic centralism that Communist Parties have traditionally adhered to.

6.2 To secure the unity and cohesion of the SACP, members are obliged to defend the SACP and to carry out its decisions. All decisions taken by higher structures are binding on all lower structures and individual members. Members shall have the right to pursue their views internally in the lead up to conferences or congresses with powers under this constitution to determine or reverse SACP policies. No groupings with their own ideology, theory and discipline shall be permitted.

6.3 All higher structures shall be accountable to lower structures and to the membership in the formulation and implementation of policies and, for this purpose,

shall wherever possible ensure regular and effective consultation with lower structures and the membership prior to the finalisation and implementation of major policies.

6.4 Save as provided for in this constitution, all elected office bearers of the SACP and all structures with the power to formulate and direct SACP policies at any level shall be elected by secret ballot unless a minimum of 75% of the delegates decide otherwise.

6.5 Members active in fraternal organisations or in any sector of the mass movement have a duty to set an example of loyalty, hard work and zeal in the performance of their duties and shall be bound by the discipline and decisions of such organisations and the movement. They shall not create or participate in SACP caucuses within such organisations and the movement designed to influence either elections or policies. The advocacy of SACP policy on any question relating to the internal affairs of any such organisations or the movement shall be by open public statements or at joint meetings between representatives of the SACP and such organisations or the movement.

6.6 Members who are elected to positions at a higher level may not stand for election to positions at a lower level in the SACP. They may serve as ex officio members of immediate lower structures.

6.7 It shall be the duty of delegates to fairly and effectively convey to Congress and policy-making conferences the mandate of the constituency that elected them. However, delegates attending such Congresses and conferences shall not be rigidly bound by these mandates and may discuss and vote on the basis of debates at such Congresses and conferences.

6.8 Employees of the SACP may not serve as elected members of constitutional structures at the same level at which they are employed, but they may serve in an advisory capacity. They may serve on and be elected to SACP structures at lower levels. If an employee of the SACP is elected to a position in the executive of the SACP at the same level, he/she must relinquish his/her original position as an employee of the SACP within a month of being elected.

6.9 All structures of the SACP shall encourage the practice of constructive criticism and self-criticism in party structures.

6.10 In all work and at every level, party structures and members shall ensure that the struggle against patriarchy and for the transformation of gender relations is given due importance, including by the creation of appropriate structures empowered to perform this task. At least one third of all executives of the SACP from branch level to the Central Committee shall be women.

6.11 Executive structures of the SACP shall have the right to co-opt SACP veterans, who shall have non-voting status. Veterans are those who have served the party with distinction for 40 years and more.

6.12 Ex-officio members of SACP structures shall not exercise a vote in those structures.

## **7. Young Communist League of South Africa (YCLSA)**

7.1 There shall be a Young Communist League (YCLSA) which comprises people from 14 to 35 years old who support the Constitution, aims, guiding principles, goals, policies and programmes of the SACP. The YCLSA shall be the autonomous youth organisation of the SACP.

7.2 While the YCLSA shall take its own decisions and shape its own policies and programmes, these shall not be in conflict with the major policies and programmes of the SACP. If necessary, the CC shall, after consultation with the YCLSA, adopt guidelines to give practical effect to this clause.

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**Course: Induction**

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